

# THE COMMONWEALTH GROWS

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### Agricultural Development Board Investment Philosophy

**The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board will invest monies from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund in innovative proposals that increase net farm income and affect tobacco farmers, tobacco-impacted communities, and agriculture across the state through stimulating markets for Kentucky agricultural products, finding new ways to add value to Kentucky agricultural products, and exploring new opportunities for Kentucky farms and farm products.**

## LONG-TERM PLAN DEVELOPMENT HEADS INTO FINAL STAGES

BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
JOHN-MARK HACK

One of the greatest benefits of the Agricultural Development Fund is that it has mobilized hundreds of people across the state to think about the long-term future of Kentucky agriculture and our rural communities. Citizens from within the agricultural community, as well as those outside of agriculture, are offering their ideas and asserting their leadership to develop the long-term plan. The creation of the plan is required by House Bill 611, the law that established the development fund.

For several months, county agricultural development councils have developed plans for their individual counties. In addition, over 500 Kentuckians participated in a series of regional plan development meetings held across the state this summer to identify regional ideas and priorities. And dozens more concerned citizens have convened in a series of general meetings and issue specific state-level meetings to not only consider the completed local and regional work but to complement it with additional contributions.

In the next thirty days, we will be working to compile all of this work into the



draft of the long-term plan. We hope to widely distribute the draft in mid-October and provide additional opportunities for public feedback on the draft through mid-November. This long-term plan will be a product of Kentuckians, by Kentuckians, and for Kentuckians.

We would like to thank you for your work on the long-term plan and to encourage you to submit your ideas and suggestions. We also look forward to hearing from you when the draft is complete. We believe that we can work together to create a plan that will ensure *The Commonwealth Grows*.

## CALENDAR OF AGRICULTURAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

### Agricultural Development Board Meeting

Friday September 21, 2001 at 10:00 am

Brown-Forman Room of the Kentucky History Center

\*Future meetings will be on the third Friday of every month in the same location. Any changes will be announced.

## Meet Agricultural Development Board Member Susan Harkins



Susan Harkins has been involved in agricultural diversification for many years. She produces organic fruits, vegetables, herbs, and tobacco. She raises shrimp and fish. She does intensive grazing of summer lambs and winter feeder calves. And she has recently added apiculture, raising bees for pollination and honey production.

In addition to her diverse farming experiences, Susan is also involved in various issue groups. She serves on the boards of the Kentucky Aquaculture Association, Bluegrass Tomorrow, Friends of the Farmers Market, and the Bourbon County Comprehensive Plan Commission. She is involved because she believes there are many areas that need to be included in the support of agriculture.

As a member of the Agricultural Development Board, Susan contributes her diverse knowledge and experiences. She says, "I come from the position of farming large acreage production, then trying to be successful with small acreage production." She has gained experience in direct marketing and looks to the market to determine pro-

## AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD APPROVES \$12.7 MILLION INVESTMENT IN PROJECTS

Since the board began accepting applications in January, a total of \$34.9 million have been committed for agricultural development projects. At the August meeting, the board approved \$12.7 million for various statewide and local projects.

The Hopkinsville Grain Elevator, a 2,300 member cooperative, was approved for \$6.5 million to develop a fuel ethanol production facility.

The Kentucky Center for Cooperative Development was approved for \$400,000 to provide technical development assistance to new or emerging agricultural cooperatives.

The board approved \$500,000 for KentuckyVirtual.com for the creation of a website to market farm products.

A 13 county project to support beef cattle heifer development was approved for \$37,000.

In addition, the board also approved local programs that meet county cost-share guidelines. Seventeen counties were approved for \$2,691,000 for forage improvement programs. Sixteen counties were approved for \$1,335,000 for cattle genetics programs. And nine counties were approved for \$508,790 for cattle handling programs.

The board also approved a county cost-share program for goat handling, genetic improvement, and breeding.

The foal death crisis investigation was another focus during the board meeting. Approved for \$56,400, the epidemiological investigation will be conducted by a team of equine epidemiologists and toxicologists working jointly with the Kentucky Equine Practitioners Association and the Kentucky Livestock Diseases Diagnostic Center.

## PROJECTS APPROVED FOR FUNDING DURING AUGUST AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

Hopkinsville Elevator Company-  
\$6.5 million (State And County)

Kentucky Center for Cooperative Development- \$400,000

KentuckyVirtual.Com- \$500,000

Heifer Development Project- \$37,080

Owensboro Catholic High School Agriculture Program- \$18,384 (Davies)

Louisville Area Farm Business Analysis Group- \$10,000 (Shelby)

Simpson County Conservation District  
- \$101,199

Marion County Farm Safety Day- \$6,000

Mid South Pork, Inc.- \$11,500 (Marion, Shelby, Washington)

Pulaski County Horticulture Association  
\$9,898 and \$64, 633

South Central Produce Association- \$6,000 (Warren)

Central Kentucky Growers Association-  
\$3,000 (Bath)

West Kentucky Grower Cooperative-  
\$50,000 (Ohio)

Green River Cattle Company- \$42,700 (Green)

Garrard County High School- \$49,327

Larue County Beef Cattle Association-  
\$16,000

McCreary County Agricultural Development Council- \$2,060

Washington County Young Farmers- \$6,000

Madisonville North Hopkins High School FFA- \$11,000 (Hopkins)

South Kentucky Agricultural Development-  
\$60,900 (Pulaski)

Washington County Grape Growers Association-  
\$275,492

## AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTION AND ANSWER



**Question:** Why has only a portion of the Agricultural Development Funds been distributed for already approved projects?

**Answer:** Funds are distributed to approved projects after a legal agreement is signed between the Agricultural Development Board and the project applicants. In the vast majority of cases, the reason that applicants have not received funds for their project is because legal agreements have been forwarded to applicants but have not been returned to the board with signatures. The Agricultural Development Board has approved many complex projects that require applicants to sort through several details before they feel comfortable signing the document.

In several other cases, those involved with large projects only request a portion of the total amount of funds for which they were approved. This approach allows interest to generate on state and county accounts from the portion of a project's approved funds that are not immediately required.

As of today, legal agreements for nearly all projects approved by the board have been drafted and forwarded to project applicants for their signature. As those agreements are returned, the board's staff works quickly with other state agencies to get checks cut and distributed. If a project applicant is in need of funds by a particular date, the applicant should notify board staff of the specific requirements of a particular project.

### Meet Susan Harkins Continued from Page Two

duction strategies. She believes that Kentucky needs to create the infrastructure to support production and markets. Kentucky needs to build on the strong identity that already exists from our bourbon and horses as well as create new identities.

When asked if Kentucky can compete with other states, Susan replied, "I think we can easily compete because of our uniqueness."

Susan also admits that a lot of work has to be put in before this can become a reality. Looking at the enormity of the task, Susan says, "It's much more complicated than anyone could ever have imagined." But she feels confident about the agricultural development process. She says, "It's a process in evolution," and went on to say, "As the money gets out and we see benefits, the Phase I process will adjust with that." In fact, the beginnings of this evolution have already occurred. She remembers, "By listening to the counties, the board has consistently readapted." The results have been the county programs for goats, cattle genetics, cattle handling, and forage improvement. Susan admits that it has sometimes been a painful process because, "Change is a scary thing and these are major changes." Yet she believes that the process can accomplish many good things for agriculture such as increasing communication. "We've got people talking to each other, even if they don't agree." She hopes such communication will foster the growth of new ideas.

## STAFF CONTACTS BY COUNTY

<u>Joel Neaveill</u>	<u>Rhodes Johnston</u>	Morgan	<u>Bill McCloskey</u>	Mercer
Adair	Ballard	Robertson	Daviess	Woodford
Breathitt	Bath	Rowan	Hancock	
Casey	Bell	Owen	Henderson	<u>Sandra Gardner</u>
Clinton	Bracken	Pendleton	McLean	Boyd
Cumberland	Boone	Rockcastle	Ohio	Carter
Green	Calloway	Whitley	Union	Elliott
Knott	Campbell		Webster	Floyd
Lee	Carlisle	<u>David Bratcher</u>		Greenup
Leslie	Carroll	Bourbon	<u>Tim Woods</u>	Johnson
Letcher	Clay	Caldwell	Allen	Lawrence
McCreary	Fleming	Christian	Barren	Magoffin
Owsley	Fulton	Clark	Butler	Martin
Perry	Gallatin	Crittenden	Edmonson	Pike
Pulaski	Grant	Estill	Hart	
Russell	Graves	Fayette	Logan	<u>Jeff Mosley</u>
Taylor	Harlan	Harrison	Metcalfe	Breckinridge
Wayne	Hickman	Hopkins	Monroe	Grayson
Wolfe	Jackson	Livingston	Simpson	Hardin
Bullitt	Kenton	Lyon	Warren	Larue
Henry	Knox	Madison		Marion
Jefferson	Laurel	Muhlenberg	<u>Jeff Harper</u>	Meade
Oldham	Lewis	Nicholas	Anderson	Nelson
Shelby	Marshall	Powell	Boyle	Washington
Spencer	Mason	Scott	Franklin	
Trimble	McCracken	Todd	Garrard	
	Menifee	Trigg	Jessamine	
	Montgomery		Lincoln	

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## INTERVIEW WITH COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBER DAVID WIMPY

The only child in his family to stay on the farm, David Wimpy has been independently raising corn, wheat, soybeans, and burley tobacco for 17 years. David said, "I'm still doing it out of a necessity for livelihood but I also enjoy it too. I always wanted to farm." In recent years, he has been trying to keep up with the changes in agriculture. He credits the lower tobacco prices for encouraging him to become more competitive although he worries about the fate of himself and his fellow farmers. He realizes, "It's gonna be tough because, you know, in Christian County, what we do best is grow corn, wheat, soybeans, and tobacco."

With \$6.5 million approved for the Hopkinsville Grain Elevator in his county, David thinks that it could be an opportunity for those who want to produce corn to get higher prices. The Christian County Council saw that the community had the resources, the existing grain elevator, and the water supply for producing ethanol. They saw the potential that such a project could



have on their region and supported its development.

Yet David knows that this project is not able to help everyone and hopes that other projects can be created to support farmers who are not corn producers. That is why he has continued to be involved as a county council member. Speaking as a farmer, David says, "We

feel like we don't have the time to be involved or we don't feel like we'll make a difference." He thinks that farmers should do exactly the opposite, taking an interest and being involved in the process. He knows that county council members volunteer their time because, "We feel like we know the situation in the county better than anyone outside of the county." He wants to find ways for people to spend their money in agriculture to support producers. He hopes that his county will disperse its funds on projects that have this potential and then build on their results.